



1019 E. First,
by Chris Donato



Cline Mill, Bloomington Limestone Co., c.1973



Gargoyle at 1002 E. First,
by Domenick Mazullo



Dog at 1002 E. First, by Domenick Mazullo



Balustrade at 1107 E. First, by Chris Donato

Front:
Stonemason
at 1002 E. First

In Appreciation:

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The houses shown here are representative and are not intended to be an exhaustive list of historic resources in the district. Please respect the privacy of the owners by viewing all listed buildings from the street.

A Walk Through the Vinegar Hill Limestone Historic District

Historic Tour Guide No. 5



City of Bloomington, Indiana



Vinegar Hill Historic District

The Indiana limestone industry began with the arrival of John Matthews, an English stonemason, in the 1850s. His small surface quarry in Ellettsville grew and by 1873, John Matthews & Sons Steam Works had installed four gang saws—to cut stone into blocks—and the first channeling machine, a revolutionary method for quarrying and transporting cut stone. By 1907, there were seventeen limestone mills and quarries within the city limits of Bloomington, with many more located elsewhere in Monroe County.

The Matthews business and many like it flourished during the late 1800s, the product of several influences. Limestone was in demand for the rebuilding of Chicago following the fire of 1871. At the same time, many architects, such as Richard Morris Hunt, were commissioned to replicate the styles of old Europe—Greek Revival and Beaux Arts—and ordered Indiana limestone to build grand houses like “The Breakers” in Newport, RI; “The Biltmore” in Asheville, NC; and the Frick Mansion in New York City.

The limestone industry saw its greatest growth and prosperity between World War I and the Great Depression. Often quarry workers found prominence as they rose to the management of large companies, founded their own firms, or became known for their artistic skills.

Also during the late 1800s Indiana Seminary, founded in 1825, became Indiana University. It relocated to Dunn's Woods, the heart of the current campus, and construction of numerous buildings was begun. Swain Hall was completed in 1910 and further expansion continued during the 1920s and 1930s with

construction of Rawles Hall, Memorial Hall, Merrill Hall and Myers Hall. The predominantly Gothic Revival style of the Indiana University campus lent itself well to the use of limestone, with elaborate architectural and decorative carvings found throughout these earlier buildings.

The hill east of downtown Bloomington that was to become known as “Vinegar Hill” began as several out lots on which an orchard was located. But its close proximity to the growing university campus provided ideal residential development potential. Construction of Elm Heights School was completed in 1926, and that same year the first home in Vinegar Hill was also built. It was the smell of rotting fruit from the abandoned orchards that was to give the neighborhood its name.

The prominence of the neighborhood is reflected in those who built homes here. Dominant names in the limestone industry with residences on the summit of the hill included Irvin S. Matthews and Albert T. Hoadley, both from industry founding families, and Kenneth Cline and David Wylie, owners of Bloomington Limestone Company. Master stone carvers also built here, although further down the hill, and included Domenick Mazzullo, Joseph Anthony, and Chris and Harry Donato. Prominent Bloomington business owners who built here included John Humphreys, a car dealer; Glen Woodward, owner of Woodward Insurance Company; and W. Earl and Mabel Sullivan, owners of a men's clothing store. Many significant Indiana University professors and researchers also lived in the neighborhood including Alfred C. Kinsey, director of the university's Institute for Sex Research, now the Kinsey

Institute; Nobel Prize winner Herman J. Muller; B. Winfred Merrill, founder and first dean of the IU School of Music; and, Henry Radford Hope, namesake of the IU School of Fine Arts.

The early architecture of Vinegar Hill reflects several period revivals, predominantly Tudor and Colonial Revival, with Greek Revival, French Provincial, Spanish Colonial, Italian Renaissance, and Art Deco also present. Many homes are highly decorated with carvings, sculpture and architectural yard features, usually designed or carved by the master stone carvers who built the residences. Another distinctive feature of the architecture reflects the growing popularity of the automobile—inclusion of a garage in most home designs. While some have detached rear garages, a relatively high number of homes have a garage tucked beneath the rear of the house. Not only did this prevent the front façade from being compromised, the garage structures often supported outdoor living spaces. This further emphasized use of the rear yards as an extension of the architecture.

While later periods of construction are present in Vinegar Hill, little visible change is evident in the neighborhood. The trees have matured but most of the homes look much as they did when constructed. And while the names of homeowners have changed, they continue to reflect the businesses and professional practices of Bloomington, or the Indiana University faculty and staff. The historic district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005.

Vinegar Hill Walking Tour



1. Mazzullo House
1002 East First
c. 1935

This home was built by Domenick and Concetta Mazzullo as their residence. Domenick immigrated to the United States from Sicily in 1903. In Bloomington he had a stone carving partnership with Joseph Anthony, who also built a home on First Street. Mazzullo's house retains the most intact personal folk art environment in the neighborhood. Carved relief decorations and gargoyle drains decorate the house, while numerous limestone artifacts are found throughout the yard. The Mazzullos also constructed the brick-clad Foursquare duplex to the north at 715-717 South Woodlawn. The couple moved into unit 717 after its completion in 1939. The limestone porch again highlights Domenick's carving talents.



2. Franzman House
1014 East First
1926

Identified as the Vallejo model by Lewis Manufacturing Company, this Craftsman bungalow was the first house built in Vinegar Hill and is a catalog home. The battered columns are distinctively limestone. William J. Franzman, mill superintendent at both Bloomington Limestone Corporation and Monon Stone Company, lived here with his wife, Grace, until his death in 1954.



3. Waldron House
1025 East First
1940-41

This limestone-clad Foursquare house is one of four built by Crescenzo "Chris" Donato as investment property. Although the facade at 1010 East First lacks carved decoration, those at 1019 and 1111 East First are nearly identical to this property in their Art Deco styling. Charles and Cecile Waldron purchased this house soon after its construction and lived here until the late 1960s. A native of Bloomington, Charles was a local attorney who received his law degree from Indiana University. His widow, Cecile, donated over \$500,000 for the John Waldron Arts Center, named for Charles' grandfather.



4. Crescenzo Donato House
1107 East First
1938

Crescenzo Di Donato built this Tudor Revival style home for himself and his wife, Mary, upon his retirement from the limestone industry. He designed the carved ashlar limestone panels. Chris Donato immigrated to the United States from Rivisonoli, Italy in 1892. He first settled in New York where he and his brother, Harry, were "honor artists" at the Cooper Union School of Art. Around 1910 they were recruited as carvers for the limestone industry and moved to Bedford. Through the 1920s and 30s, Donato owned his own stone cutting mills, including one of the largest in the area, the Heltonville Limestone Corporation. Donato's retirement was devoted to painting and rebuilding his hometown church destroyed during World War II.



5. Harry Donato House
1116 East First
c. 192

This Spanish Colonial Revival style house was built by Harry Donato for himself and his wife, Christina. The Palladian window is the focal point of the home's limestone-clad facade. A birdbath, urn and two planters, along with structural elements, reflect Harry's craft. After working with his brother Chris, he became an independent stone carver. Harry and Christina lived here until 1945, and unfortunately he died suddenly in 1947. Immediately to the east is the Feltus House at 1120 East First. The Colonial Revival style home was constructed in 1926 by siblings, Harry and Gertrude Feltus. This prominent Bloomington family also included brother Paul, who owned the *Bloomington Star*, and brother Roy, owner of the Princess and Harris Grand Theaters.



6. Bruner-Townsend House
1123 East First
c. 1933

This Spanish Colonial Revival style home was built by Fred and Adlin Bruner as their home. Its rusticated limestone block construction is accented with ashlar quoined corners. It also features arched window and door openings, a barrel-tile roof, a copper-roofed balcony and a portico with carved stone columns on the east side. The attached garage indicates the growing importance of the automobile. Born Jean Marie Ferdinand Bruner in Bischwiller, France, Fred was a local stone carver who eventually co-owned the F.B. Harris Cut Stone Company. He sold the home in 1935 to Charles B. and Lula Townsend who owned C.B. Townsend Lumber Company.



7. Letsinger-Will House
721 South Ballantine
1937

Burns and James Architects of Indianapolis designed this Tudor Revival style home for Reed Letsinger, an attorney, cattleman and farmer, and bookkeeper of the Letsinger Coal Company. He sold the house in 1948 to Samuel and Constance Will. Samuel was professor of French and Italian at Indiana University. The one and a half story, cross-gabled house is clad in rusticated limestone and its facade is dominated by a massive stone chimney. The house at 720 South Ballantine, across the street, was built for B. Frank and Johanna Leonard, who owned the New Home Laundry. Later residents included IU basketball coach, Branch McCracken, and quarry owner, Robert Reed.



8. Elliott-Pressler House
1202 East First
c. 1926

Frank and Sarah Elliott built this shake-clad Tudor Revival house. In 1921, Frank organized the Indiana University public relations program, forerunner to the News Bureau, and taught advertising in the School of Journalism. He then served as the first Dean of Admissions until his retirement in 1946. Stanley and Dorothy Pressler purchased the house in 1945 and lived here until 1979. Stanley was an IU professor of accounting, nationally recognized as an authority of health care financial management. Dorothy owned Harry Stephens Oldsmobile following the death of her father, Harry Stephens. To the east, across the street is the Humphreys-Boerner House at 1213 East First. Constructed in 1938-39 for John and Clara Humphreys, this Georgian plan house displays a French Provincial style in its multiple hipped roof, close eaves and projecting central entrance bay. John was in the automobile business with dealerships in Bloomfield, Washington, Linton and Bloomington until his retirement in 1959. Peter and Nancy Boerner have owned the home since 1975.



9. Matthews-Temple House
725 South Highland
1927

English-born architect, Alfred Grindle, designed this home for Irvin and Mildred Matthews. Its Tudor Revival style is dominated by the central projecting parapeted entrance portico. The gable end walls are also parapeted and are topped with turned stone finials. The cast iron fence was likely created by Seward Ironworks of Bloomington. Irvin—grandson of John Matthews, the "Father of the Indiana Limestone Industry"—served as supervisor of Matthews family limestone companies and as vice president of the New Home Laundry. John and Roma Temple purchased the house around 1945. A native of English, IN, John operated a drugstore, grocery store, canning factory and real estate office there until moving to Bloomington in 1928. He then opened Bloomington Hardware Company, which is still operated by the Temple family.



10. Wylie House
1319 East First
1928

David G. and Florence Wylie had this Tudor Revival style home constructed in 1928. Born in Scotland in 1888, David was president and treasurer of the Bloomington Limestone Company and secretary-treasurer of the Indiana Calcium Company. He also served as director of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce and as president and director of the Indiana Limestone Institute. The Kenneth and Dorothy Cline house at 1323 East First, and the Glen and Ella Woodward house at 1327 East First were also constructed within a two-year time frame. The Woodward house was designed by architect Alfred Grindle and the similar style of the Wylie and Cline houses suggest they can also be attributed to him. Kenneth Cline was born into the limestone industry and served in various top-level positions at several family companies. This eventually included vice president of Bloomington Limestone Company and ownership of Cline Cut Stone Company at the BLC Cline Mill. Glen Woodward owned Woodward Insurance Company, and served as president of First National Bank, vice president of Citizen's Bank and Trust Company, and as president of Bloomington Development Corporation.



11. Kinsey House
1320 East First
1927

Alfred C. Kinsey was the internationally renowned director of Indiana University's Institute for Sex Research, now known as the Kinsey Institute. His controversial work included two best-selling books, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. Alfred designed this house for him and his wife, Clara, and their family around a large persimmon tree that unfortunately blew down in 1995. The over burned bricks were purposely laid unevenly, with the mortar oozing out, to achieve an aged appearance appropriate to the naturalized grounds. Alfred cultivated day lilies and iris in his garden, with up to 250 varieties of iris at one point, and sold the bulbs for a number of years.



12. Landis House
710 South Jordan
c. 1930

This house may have been designed by Alfred Grindle given its similarities to the Woodward house. Distinctive features of this Tudor Revival style house are the rusticated limestone block facing, central arched entrance, and gabled wall dormers. It was built for Rex D. and Blanche Landis, presumably by Rex's own contracting firm, Landis and Young. It is believed they were also the contractors of the c. 1930 Tudor Revival style houses at 701 and 719 South Jordan.



13. Evens House
727 South Jordan
1930

It is believed Landis and Young also constructed this Tudor Revival style house. Although faced with ashlar limestone blocks, the gable and south dormer are half-timbered. A metal owl, symbolizing wisdom, decorates the central chimney. The first owners were Alfred Evens, and IU law professor, and his wife, Kathleen. All told, the family occupied the house for 40 years. The hewn log house at the north end of the property was moved here in 1976 in celebration of the nation's bicentennial.



14. Hoadley-Hope House
800 South Sheridan
1938

This large Colonial Revival style home is quite significant in both its architecture and lineage. It was designed by architect James D. Foley of Indianapolis for Albert T. and Kathryn Hoadley. Of particular note are the 18-foot tall, single piece, limestone columns that support the two-story front pavilion. The Federal style entrance surround is topped with a Palladian-inspired window. Albert was a member of the Hoadley family who owned several limestone operations throughout five generations. In 1945 the house was purchased by Henry Radford Hope and his wife, Sally. A nationally known art critic and historian, Henry established the IU School of Fine Arts, oversaw construction of the Fine Arts Building and Showalter Fountain, and established the IU Art Museum with then IU President Herman B. Wells. Henry and Sally's impressive art collection, once housed both inside and outside their home, now comprises much of the IU Art Museum's permanent collection.



15. Merrill House
824 South Sheridan
1928-29

Prominent New York architect Ernest Flagg designed this French Provincial Revival style house for B. Winfred Merrill and his wife, Mary. Winfred founded the IU School of Music in 1921 and served as its dean until his retirement in 1938. A friend directed him to an article by Flagg in *Collier's* magazine entitled, "Build a House and Save a Third," which led to the architect's hire by the Merrills. The house's design reflects a French farmhouse with a living room at the front, an interior court, and bedrooms to the rear. The exterior walls are Paoli limestone rubble and poured concrete. The paired casement windows are steeply pitched beneath gabled pediments so as to resemble wall dormers. The small tower over the courtyard is topped with a weather vane depicting a replica of Winfred's violin.



16. Sullivan House
837 South Sheridan
1929

W. Earl and Mabel Sullivan, owners of Sullivan's menswear store in downtown Bloomington, had this home constructed by Hughes Brothers & Company. The Sullivans saw the house at the 1929 Indianapolis Home Builder's Association Home Show where it was showcased. Designed by architect Ralph W. Miller, this Tudor Revival style house appeared in a 70-year retrospective of the Home Show in the January 1992 *Indianapolis Monthly* magazine. At least five other copies have reportedly been found, one in Franklin, IN, and four in the Indianapolis area.



1025 E. First, by Chris Donato